

# Inspection of a good school: Sandford School

Sandford, Crediton, Devon EX17 4NE

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Inspection date:

13 July 2022

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have started to make positive changes to the school following a period of turbulence. However, leaders' expectations of what pupils can achieve, and their behaviour, are not high enough.

Leaders' approach to managing behaviour is inconsistent. Some pupils do not behave well. As a result, learning is sometimes disrupted. While pupils feel safe, a few worry about the behaviour of others. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often but they know what to do if it did. They say that staff care about them. Pupils can share any worries with staff during the regular 'walk and talk' listening sessions.

Almost half of the parents who responded to the Ofsted survey do not think that leaders deal with concerns appropriately. They feel that leaders' expectations are too low. A high number of parents show dissatisfaction with how leaders communicate with them.

Most pupils enjoy attending school. They say that it is usually a friendly and welcoming place. Pupils find their learning interesting. They speak fondly about the trips that leaders plan for them. Pupils can access a range of extra-curricular clubs.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have started to make improvements to the curriculum. However, the curriculum design in some foundation subjects is not well thought out. The sequencing of learning does not support pupils to build their knowledge well enough. Pupils struggle to remember their learning. Teachers do not use assessment effectively in some subjects. They do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils know and remember. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge.

Pupils learn well in some parts of the curriculum, such as mathematics. This is because the curriculum structure is carefully considered. Pupils regularly revisit key knowledge. This helps them to remember their learning over time. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They ask relevant questions and create learning activities that develop pupils' understanding well. Teachers encourage pupils to think about their learning. They make sure that misconceptions do not develop.

Leaders create an inclusive environment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the support that they need to learn well. They have suitable targets. Leaders identify their needs at the earliest opportunity. Leaders think about how pupils will build their confidence alongside their knowledge. Staff receive training that enables them to support pupils effectively.

Teachers' ambitions for what pupils can achieve in phonics are not high enough. Pupils' progress is monitored. However, this is sometimes inaccurate. Teaching is not responsive to pupils' needs. Pupils are not suitably challenged. As a result, some pupils become disengaged and do not learn to read as well as they could. Most pupils read books that contain the sounds they know. This helps them to become more familiar with the sounds that they learn in class. Pupils learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Staff share recommendations for their favourite books. Pupils read regularly at home. Leaders share information about the reading programme with parents. This helps them to understand the school's approach to phonics.

Pupils speak with confidence about online safety. They know not to share personal information and to report any concerns to a trusted adult. Leaders carefully consider how to support pupils' mental health. Pupils have regular access to outdoor learning activities. These include tending to the allotment and looking after the chickens. As a result, pupils learn to take responsibility. Pupils understand different types of relationships through the planned curriculum. They respect differences. Leaders consider what pupils need to know, to understand the world beyond the local area.

Most staff are proud to work at the school. They say that leaders consider their workload when making improvements. However, pupils' behaviour, at times, has a negative impact on their well-being.

Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They ask the right questions to check on the quality of education. Governors, and the local authority, know that improvements need to continue with urgency.

In discussion with the executive headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the organisation of the curriculum, standards of behaviour and the impact of stronger communication with parents may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide suitable safeguarding training. This helps staff to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Staff record concerns and leaders act on these. Leaders work with other professionals to secure the support that vulnerable families need.

Pupils learn how to keep safe online. They know what to do if something worries them.

Leaders make the right safeguarding checks during recruitment. However, they do not make sure that the checks are recorded with accuracy on the single central record.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders' expectations of behaviour are not high enough. Pupils do not behave as well as they could. Learning is sometimes disturbed. Leaders need to make sure that staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour for all pupils.
- Some subjects within the curriculum are not designed well. Pupils do not build knowledge as well as they could. They sometimes find it difficult to remember their learning. Leaders need to ensure each subject is designed well, with the key knowledge pupils need to learn clearly identified. This knowledge needs to be taught in a well sequenced way to build pupils' knowledge.
- In some subjects, teachers do not use assessment effectively. They are unsure what pupils know and remember. Pupils do not, therefore, build on their prior knowledge. Leaders need to make sure that assessment is used effectively so that teachers understand what pupils know and remember from the intended curriculum.
- Many parents consider the standard of pupils' behaviour and communication from leaders to be poor. The majority of parents would not recommend the school. Pupils do not benefit from strong home and school partnerships. Leaders need to ensure that there is effective communication between school and home so that parents can work with the school to support their child's education.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	113107
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227124
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	131
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jackie Enright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edward Nichols
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.exevalleyfederation.co.uk">www.exevalleyfederation.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Sandford School is part of the Exe Valley Federation with five other primary schools.
- The head of school joined the school in September 2021. There is also an executive headteacher in place.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- The early years includes provision for three-year-olds.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, members of staff and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors checked the procedures for keeping pupils safe, including scrutinising the single central record.
- An inspector checked all survey responses, including 37 from pupils, 11 from staff and 47 from parents. This included considering the 41 responses to Ofsted's Parent View free-text service.
- The lead inspector received email communication from one parent during the inspection.
- Inspectors met with pupils and staff to gather their views and find out what is it like to be part of the school.
- An inspector visited the on-site after-school club.
- Inspectors looked at the school's plans for improvement, monitoring documents, safeguarding records and reports from the local authority.

### **Inspection team**

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Steve Smith

Ofsted Inspector

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